

~~SECRET~~CASEY BRIEFING INPUT

24 December 1980  
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USSR Intelligence Issues.

1. Representatives of all intelligence agencies met under the auspices of the NIO/USSR on 17 December to discuss possible "tests" of the new Administration by the Soviet Union. The Community representatives unanimously agreed that the Soviets almost certainly will not confront the Administration with a test of strength -- such as an aggressive military move in the Third World -- or will in its early days. Indeed, the Group expressed the view that the Soviet leaders will try to avoid such provocations at the outset of the Administration.

2. The Community representatives also agreed, however, that the Soviets would be "testing" the new Administration in other, subtle diplomatic ways. For example, we expect the Soviets to consider the Administration's initial moves on SALT, trade, and the grain embargo as important "tests" of future intentions and policy -- and such early moves will thus have considerable weight in terms of Soviet perceptions of the new Administration.

3. In terms of diplomatic initiatives, reporting to date suggests that the Soviets will wait for the new President to make the first move.

Current Crises.

1. Poland: The Soviets are militarily prepared to intervene on short notice. However, the internal situation has remained relatively calm for nearly a month and, in the absence of a serious provocation by Solidarity (and further concessions by Kania), we would not expect a Soviet military move into Poland. The situation in the country remains very unstable, though, and any of several events -- food riots, new strikes, interference with lines of communication, further disintegration

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of party control or unity, etc. -- could trigger coercive measures.

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2. Afghanistan: No significant change in Soviet policy toward Afghanistan or their military campaign there is anticipated between now and spring.

3. Iran-Iraq War: The Soviets are seeking to shore up their position with Iraq after several weeks of leaning toward Iran. They still will try to maintain a balancing act between the two as the war drags on -- probably satisfying neither and antagonizing both. A Soviet diplomatic initiative to mediate and end the fighting is possible, but Moscow's standing in both Baghdad and Teheran is such that the effort would almost certain fail.

4. Middle East: We believe the Soviets have tried to tamp down the tension between Syria and Lebanon. While the USSR will not cooperate in US efforts to keep or restore ceasefires, their own equities with the Syrians and PLO -- as well their desire to avoid conflict between Syria and Israel -- will prompt them to act independently (and in ways to maximize their own influence) to keep the lid on in the eastern Mediterranean.

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